

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this legislation today. It is a disappointment and a huge lost opportunity to actually help so many struggling families all across the country.

#### WE NEED TO RESTART PUERTO RICO'S ECONOMY

(Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, Puerto Rico's economy is the most vital aspect in bringing back some sense of normalcy to the lives of 3.4 million American citizens on the island after the devastating impact of both Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Puerto Rico's economy had already been in a decline prior to these unprecedented natural disasters, due mostly to the island's outdated and discriminatory territorial status.

Tax reform presented this Congress with the historic opportunity to, even if only partially, fix these longstanding inequities by granting Puerto Rico equal treatment to that of the 50 States.

While we are grateful for the extension of federally qualified opportunity zones in this bill to the island, I believe that there is broad recognition on both sides of the aisle that more needs to be done in the future.

Congress must live up to its responsibility and act decisively to end years of improvisation by implementing sustainable pro-growth economic policies that are based upon the bedrock principles of citizen equality and political empower, and my constituents deserve no less.

#### AMTRAK CASCADES 501

(Ms. JAYAPAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. Yesterday, my home State and my home district suffered a great tragedy. Amtrak Cascades 501, traveling from Seattle to Portland, Oregon, carrying 80 passengers and seven crewmembers, derailed near Olympia, Washington.

Early reports are that at least three passengers have died and nearly 100 people needed hospital care. My heart and prayers go out to all those families as they deal with this tragedy.

Our office stands ready to help any constituents in any way that we can. For up-to-date information, friends and family on Amtrak Cascades 501 can also call 1-800-523-9101.

I also want to thank our first responders for their skill and their courage. This could have been far worse without them.

But as Amtrak, the National Transportation Safety Board, and State and local officials help on the scene, there

are still so many questions, like: Why was the train going 50 miles over the speed limit as it rounded the curve? Why was the train not using positive train control technology to slow the train down? How, Mr. Speaker, can we be sure that this never happens again?

Mr. Speaker, I will do everything I can to ensure that the investigation and our affected families have the resources and the support necessary to get the facts in the coming days and months.

#### HONORING RILETTA CREAM

(Mr. NORCROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a very special woman, Mrs. Riletta Cream, from Camden County, but was known not only from the city she was born in, but the entire State of New Jersey. She passed away, unfortunately, yesterday.

Mrs. Cream was a kind, gentle, and loving woman, but had special character, strength, and conviction.

She was known as an institution for education and public service. She was a friend, a mentor, an educator, and a dear, dear friend to so many of those children who went to her school.

She was a Camden city native, and was a principal of Camden City High School for over a decade. She served as a role model for students, teachers, and administrators. After retiring, she didn't give up. She then ran as a freeholder, and was elected time after time, continuing to serve the community.

She led projects at the time called Tech 2000 to make sure there was a computer in every child's classroom and at their desk. She fought for libraries when funding was short. She knew the value of education, whether it was going to college or to a trade school.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you will join me in mourning the loss of this shining light in my hometown. Mrs. Cream accomplished so much and gave so many years of service. May she rest in peace.

#### IN HONOR OF LILLIE BIGGINS

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my neighbor in east Fort Worth and my friend, Lillie Biggins, who will soon be retiring from the Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital after 45 years of service.

Lillie joined the Texas Health Fort Worth family back in 1997, serving as vice president of operations. Her role was critical in overseeing major departments, such as emergency services, trauma services, and restorative services.

During her tenure, she helped cultivate a vision of success for the Texas Health Fort Worth community. Not

only did Lillie dedicate her time in the health community, but she also volunteers all around the city of Fort Worth. Lillie often mentors and helps others in the area of health, education, youth, senior citizen services, businesses, and so many areas in our city that are underserved.

For her dedicated service to the community, she has been awarded so many awards, including her induction into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Lillie all the best as she moves on into her relaxing retirement, but I know that she probably won't be that relaxed and that she is going to be very active in the community. I wish her the best in the future.

#### THE REPUBLICAN TAX SCAM

(Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what do Iran, Ebenezer Scrooge, and the Republican tax scam have in common?

Well, they are all ruthless, cutthroat, coldblooded, heartless, and stingy.

That is why I voted "no" on the Republican tax scam, and if I could have added an H to the no, I would have.

This legislation gives 83 percent of the tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent, while raising taxes on 86 million middle-income families.

The numbers prove that this is a tax cut for the ultrawealthy and not for the middle class, and anyone who tries to deceive you into thinking otherwise, shame on them.

Adding insult to injury, this tax cut adds \$1.5 trillion to the national debt, and Republicans will soon use the debt to justify their ultimate plan, which is to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Today's vote proves that Republicans care more about the wealthy and big multinational corporations than they do for ordinary people.

Merry Christmas to the wealthy, who already have plenty, and to their special interest lobbyists. And to the rest of America struggling to make ends meet, bah humbug.

#### THE CORKER KICKBACK

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as Republicans rammed through their tax gravy train for billionaires, we learned of another carve-out to megainvestors in real estate.

This carve-out allows real estate businesses to take advantage of a new tax break, which was parachuted into the Senate bill to swing Republican votes, like Senator BOB CORKER.

Drain the swamp?

The Republicans are laughing all the way to the bank.